

## RBS and RUS, USDA

## § 4280.180

(2) For a Rural Small Business, 20 points will be awarded if the applicant is a very small business, as defined in § 4280.103.

(d) *Experience and qualifications of the entity identified to perform the feasibility study.* A maximum of 15 points can be awarded under this section.

(1) 15 points will be awarded if the entity has 5 or more years experience in the field of study for the technology being proposed.

(2) 7.5 points will be awarded if the entity has 2 or more years, but less than 5 years, experience in the field of study for the technology field being proposed.

(3) 0 points will be awarded if the entity has less than 2 years experience in the field of study for the technology field being proposed.

(e) *Size of feasibility study grant request.* A maximum of 20 points can be awarded under this section. If the feasibility study request is:

(1) \$10,000 or less, 20 points will be awarded.

(2) Greater than \$10,000 up to and including \$25,000, 10 points will be awarded.

(3) Greater than \$25,000, 0 points will be awarded.

(f) *Resources to implement project.* Considering the technology being proposed, the applicant may qualify for other local or State programs to assist in the construction or operation of the facility. These programs will benefit the applicant and/or proposed project during or after the facility is constructed and operational. Points can be awarded for both types of assistance, for a maximum of 10 points.

(1) If the applicant has identified local programs, 5 points will be awarded.

(2) If the applicant has identified State programs, 5 points will be awarded.

### § 4280.179 Selecting feasibility study grant applications for award.

The Agency will use the following process to determine which feasibility study grants receive funding under this subpart.

(a) *Ranking of applications.* All scored applications will be ranked by the Agency as soon after the application

deadline as possible. All applications that are ranked will be considered for selection for funding.

(b) *Selection of applications for funding.* Using the ranking created under paragraph (a) of this section, the Agency will consider the score an application has received compared to the scores of other ranked applications, with higher scoring applications receiving first consideration for funding.

(c) *Funding selected applications.* As applications are funded, if insufficient funds remain to fund the next highest scoring application, the Agency may elect to fund a lower scoring application. Before this occurs, the Agency will provide the applicant of the higher scoring application the opportunity to reduce the amount of its grant request to the amount of funds available. If the applicant agrees to lower its grant request, it must certify that the purposes of the project can be met, and the Agency must determine the project is financially feasible at the lower amount.

(d) *Disposition of ranked applications not funded.* Based on the availability of funding, a ranked application may not be funded in the fiscal year in which it was submitted. Such ranked applications will not be carried forward into Fiscal Year 2012 and the Agency will notify the applicant in writing.

### § 4280.180 Actions prior to grant closing.

(a) *Environmental.* If construction is a component of the study, the appropriate level of environmental assessment must be completed prior to the obligation of funds. All feasibility study grants made under this subpart are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 1940, subpart G. When construction is not a component of the study, feasibility studies are considered planning assistance, which are categorically excluded from the environmental review process by § 1940.310 of this title.

(b) *Evidence of other funds.* Applicants expecting funds from other sources for use in completing projects being partially financed with Agency funds shall present evidence of the commitment of these funds from such other sources prior to disbursement of grant funds.